

Office of Education Improvement and Innovation Newsletter

August 2013



Director's Desk

It's that time of year when we begin the countdown to the beginning of another school year. The buildings are all cleaned up, books and materials are coming in daily, staff is almost in place and the schedules are taking shape. Here at the MDE we can feel the excitement begin to build. The number of phone calls goes up—teachers, parents, building and district leaders all have questions about the myriad of issues that come with the opening of the school year. Probably the one that we hear about the most right now is the status of the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). At the heart of all of the questions is the language in the Department Budget Bill that precludes the Department of Education from spending any funds on the implementation of the CCSS and the accompanying assessments that Michigan is working on with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

This summer, the House of Representatives is holding a series of hearings about the CCSS. The first hearing was on July 16th where Michael Cohen of Achieve, Mike Flanagan, State Superintendent, Vince Dean from our assessment office and I were able to testify.

The legislators on the committee were very attentive and had lots of questions. The second hearing was on July 31st where there was testimony from a variety of nationally-recognized individuals both in favor of and in opposition to the CCSS. Bill Schmidt from MSU was one of those providing testimony. There will be two more hearings in August (14th and 29th) where interested parties can provide information about whether or not the legislature should affirm the standards. I hope that you will let you legislators know how you feel—pro or con—about continuing the implementation of the CCSS. They need informed input from across the state to aid in their decision-making.

While the discussion continues, it is important to note that the language in the budget bill does not apply to districts or schools and that the first assessment provided through the Smarter Balanced Consortium will not occur until Spring 2015. Plans in the local school districts for this year need not change because of this legislation.

Our team at OEII has been hard at work on a variety of initiatives this summer. Among them are the ones highlighted on the following pages. We hope that these will prove helpful whether in the form of grants or strategies and tools. Look for additional resources to be rolled out in the coming months. We are excited about this work and hope that you will share in our enthusiasm.



Curriculum and Instruction

What do career- and college-ready students look like?

All Michigan students are required to demonstrate proficiency in the state career- and college-ready standards in order to receive a diploma. But what exactly does it mean to be career- and college-ready? Of course, students need to be proficient in the content standards but they also need to be skilled in navigating through real-world situations. In order to be prepared for life beyond high school, whether that's in a job or continuing onto postsecondary, students need to engage in tasks worth doing and tests worth taking. It is critical that we provide students with tasks that are relevant and meaningful to their lives so that they can transfer their knowledge and skills to real-world challenges. As educators, we are obligated to prepare students for the most optimum educational experiences of their lives. Therefore, it's fundamental to increased student achievement that the career- and college-ready characteristics be woven into all student learning tasks.

For more information, visit the Michigan Department of Education's home page and click on the Career and College-Ready tab or contact Gregg Dionne, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction Unit, dionneg@michigan.gov.

Career- and College-Ready Students:

- Use **technology and tools** strategically in learning and Communicating
- Use **argument and reasoning** to do research, construct arguments, and critique the reasoning of others
- **Communicate and collaborate** effectively with a variety of audiences
- **Solve problems**, construct explanations, and design solutions

Tasks Worth Doing Tests Worth Taking

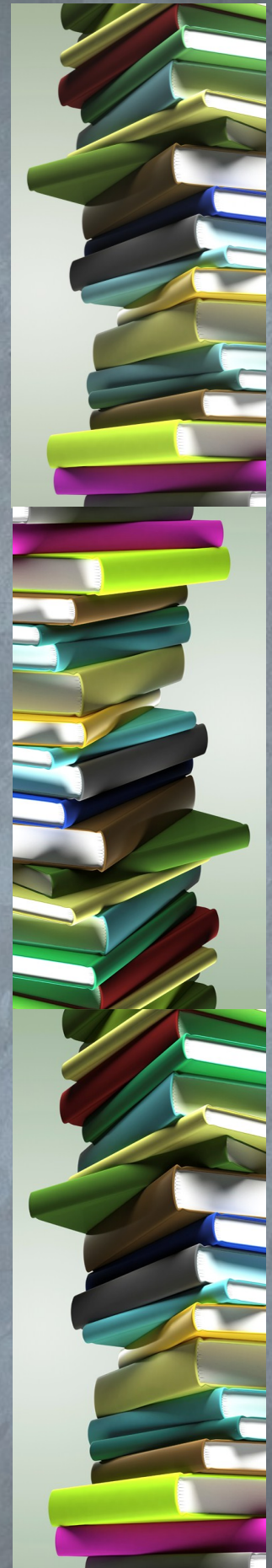
- Real World Challenges
- Relevant to Student Lives
- Integrate Content Areas
- Transfer of Knowledge

Public School Academies (PSA)

The Public School Academies Unit had the capability to offer professional development opportunities to new and existing schools and school boards.

School boards will receive three days of training with Berri K. Meyers, August 5-7. This training is centered around the book Strategic Planning: Clean Up in Aisle 4! Boards will have the opportunity to develop a clear vision and mission for the school along with collaborating with other board members from around the state.

New and existing PSA schools were invited to a joint training by the PSA unit and the Curriculum and Instruction unit. This training focused on curriculum alignment to the standards, formative and summative assessments, developing professional learning communities, and participation in data conversations. Participants were exposed to a variety of resources available to them and will be able to participate in additional online training during the school year.



School Improvement Support

As a result of over a year of study, the Michigan Department of Education has launched the African-American Young Men of Promise Initiative (AAYMPI) as a project to eliminate the achievement gap. The goal is to work with schools to significantly improve the academic performance of African-American male students in the state so that there is no gap between their performance and that of the highest performing student group. Program participation is voluntary and involvement includes support to each school. A social justice framework has been used to design the Initiative so that issues of equity are addressed in the selection and implementation of the program components. These components consist of intentional instructional strategies, climate and culture strategies, participation in a professional learning community, engagement of students in a student voice group, on-going data collection, State Library resources, and the involvement of a community voice group.

Each school in the Initiative must be a Title I participating school. Each must also choose one intentional instructional strategy and one climate and culture strategy. OEII and the Office of School Support Services are providing professional assistance through various vendors for all other support services to the school, including EduGuide, the developer of the professional learning community platform, and the American Research Institute (AIR), that will be handling the data collection and analysis. There will also be webinars and conference calls monthly to provide opportunities to present successes, celebrate accomplishments, and share ideas. These events will also be placed on the MDE website.

One unique program in which schools can participate is the College Ambition Program. This is a venture through Michigan State University to change a school's climate and culture from a non-college-going environment to one that supports, nurtures, and develops students as college-going participants.

The launch of the AAYMPI will be August 2-3, 2013,

Continued

School Improvement Support, continued

at the Lansing Center and Radisson Hotel and Conference Center where selected schools will come together for two days of intense training and preparation for the implementation of program components during the year. For more information contact Theresa Saunders, Consultant, OEII, at SaundersT@michigan.gov or 517-241-9566.

Educational Technology

Technology Readiness Infrastructure Grant

The Technology Readiness Infrastructure Grant is progressing into Category Five. The Michigan Department of Education intends to make funds available to an awardee in August 2013. The statewide bid in part of Category Three, Activity Four is set to close July 31, 2013, for both laptops and desktop computers. Hundreds of intermediate school districts, public school academies and public school districts have taken advantage of the discounts available and will become better prepared, technology-wise, for students in the upcoming school year. A fundamental goal of the grant continues to support "any time, any place, any way, any pace" learning as established by Governor Rick Snyder. This statewide competitive bid process for devices that provide online assessments will help to reach this ambitious goal.

Michigan Teacher of the Year

Follow the 2013-2014 Michigan Teacher of the Year, Gary G. Abud, Jr. on Twitter @mr-abud. His website is <http://abud.me>.

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Educational Technology, continued

The Michigan Teacher of the Year 2014-2015 nomination window will open in early October 2014. Please begin to consider whether a teacher in your school or district should be nominated for the award.

Rap Genius Webinar

Were you unable to participate in the Rap Genius last minute professional development opportunity sponsored by OEII's Educational Technology Unit? The webinar with Rap Genius' Education Czar, Dr. Jeremy Dean, was a great success. Rap Genius' sister sites ([Rock Genius](#), [Poetry Genius](#), and [News Genius](#)) have a wealth of content perfect for the secondary and high school classroom. If you would like to view the webinar, it is on Vimeo [here](#).

ASSIST

On July 20, 2013, there was a software 4.0 ASSIST Platform release. These updates were based on feedback from the field. A number of enhancements and updates have been added to the ASSIST Platform. All previously entered data including reports and diagnostics entered or completed will remain the same.

The ASSIST Software Release notes are [here](#). A pre-recorded webinar detailing these enhancements is available online, on the [training page](#) of the AdvancED Michigan/MDE website.

Upcoming reporting date:

School Improvement Plan (SIP) Due September 1, 2013.

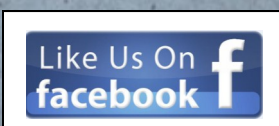
Facebook Feature

We have a pending pilot school interview at St. Clair Virtual Learning Academy to identify best practices in our processes. Subject matter experts will be conducting the interviews. To recommend that the Office of Education Improvement and Innovation (OEII) highlight your school for its innovative program/practices, fill out a form at <http://tinyurl.com/oeiifbform> or on [Survey Monkey](#).

We have partnered with the Bureau of Assessment and Accountability's Kaylee Scott, who administers the Education Technology Workgroup Facebook page.

We have also welcomed Kimberly Ferguson to the OEII Facebook team. She has a Bachelors in Broadcast Production from Grand Valley State University and three years of television production experience.

Like OEII on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/#!/MDEOEII>



Events/Important Dates

8/9/2013 – Request for proposals for the next round of the Math/Science Partnership (MSP)

The MSP Grant Program is soliciting proposals for new and continuing projects. This program is intended to increase the academic achievement of students in mathematics and science by enhancing the content knowledge and teaching skills of classroom teachers. Partnerships between high-need school districts and the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) faculty in institutions of higher education are at the core of these improvement efforts. More information can be found at www.michigan.gov/